

Message Text

SECRET

PAGE 01 JAKART 01006 231000Z
ACTION SS-25

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FM AMEMBASSY JAKARTA
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 6337

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EXDIS

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PINT, PINS, SHUM, MASS, ID
SUBJECT: U.S. REACTION TO NEWSPAPER CLOSURES AND STUDENT ARRESTS

1. WHEN QUERYING CENTER FOR STRATEGIC AND INTERNATIONAL STUDIES (CSIS) STAFFER LIM BIAN KIE ON BACKGROUND OF STUDENT ARRESTS AND NEWSPAPER CLOSURES (HIS COMMENTS BEING REPORTED SEPTTEL), WE NOTED UNFAVORABLE IMPACT THESE STEPS ARE LIKELY TO HAVE IN U.S. WE POINTED OUT THAT ASSISTANT SECRETARY DERIAN HAD BEEN IMPRESSED WITH VIGOR OF INDONESIAN PRESS AND HAD BEEN TOLD THAT ALL MALARI DETAINEES HAD BEEN RELEASED. ONE WEEK LATER NEWSPAPERS SHE HAD ADMIRER HAD BEEN SUSPENDED AND LARGE NUMBER OF STUDENTS AND SOME FORMER MALARI DETAINEES HAD BEEN ARRESTED, APPARENTLY WITHOUT WARRANT.

2. LIM ARGUED THAT SITUATION MIGHT HAVE BEEN FAR WORSE IF STUDENTS AND THEIR ALLIES HAD NOT BEEN PREEMPTED IN THIS MANNER. ALMOST AS DIGRESSIN, LIM NOTED THAT U.S. ATTITUDES HAD NOT ALWAYS BEEN WELL UNDERSTOOD BY GOI LEADERS, WHO TENDED SEE OVERALL PATTERN IN IRS TAX RULING, DOE LNG DECISION AND DELAY IN PROCESSING F-5 PURCHASE REQUEST, WHICH LIM HIMSELF KNEW DID NOT EXIST. WE INTERJECTED THAT INFORMAL NOTIFICATION TO CONGRESS ON F-5 WOULD COINCIDE WITH GOI CLAMP-DOWN ON PRESS AND STUDENTS AND THAT IT WOULD BE HELPFUL IF SITUATION WERE DIFFERENT BEFORE FORMAL NOTI-

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FICATION MADE 20 DAYS LATER. LIM AGREED BUT STRESSED THAT USG SHOULD NOT PROTEST GOI ACTION AT THIS TIME SINCE THIS WOULD ONLY ADD TO SECURITY AUTHORITIES' DETERMINATION TO TAKE HARD LINE AND TO GOI OFFICIALS' SUSPICIONS OF U.S. ATTITUDES.

3. COMMENT: WE BELIEVE IT BEST TO LOW KEY U.S. REACTION TO

RECENT GOI ACTIONS UNTIL WE HAVE BETTER IDEA OF POSSIBLE
DURATION OF DETENTIONS AND NEWSPAPER CLOSURES. AS DEPARTMENT
IS AWARE, SUCH ACTIONS HAVE IN PAST BEEN USED AS WARNINGS
ONLY AND LIFTED IN MATTER OF FEW DAYS. TOUGH PUBLIC
POSTURE ON OUR PART MIGHT AT THIS STAGE CAUSE GOI TO MAIN-
TAIN THEM IN EFFECT LONGER THAN ORIGINALLY INTENDED IN ORDER
NOT TO APPEAR TO BE CEDING TO OUTSIDE PRESSURE.
MASTERS

SECRET

NNN

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